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ABSTRACT

A faculty development program proposed for Longwood College in Virginia would encourage faculty members in all disciplines to incorporate more writing into their classes. The program consists of five major components and involves a number of workshops. The first component familiarizes faculty members with the theoretical and practical foundations of a writing-across-the-curriculum program and consists of two workshops conducted by outside consultants. The second component involves several workshops by faculty members at the college. These workshops show subject area teachers how to evaluate papers, make writing assignments, and move students through the stages of the composing process. The third component is a workshop for members of the English department designed to help them understand the implications of a writing-across-the-curriculum program. The fourth component is a workshop intended to help members of the college's English proficiency committee broaden the scope of its endeavors, while the final component is a workshop for students who serve as tutors in the college's writing laboratory. (An outline of the five components is included in the paper.) (FL)

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FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
in
WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

ELLERY SEDGWICK III

Developed
at the
National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute
at
Beaver College, 1982

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A FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM IN WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

LONGWOOD COLLEGE - FARMVILLE, VIRGINIA

I. Workshops conducted by consultants from outside the college:

1. Four day workshop - August 16-19, 1982.
2. Two day workshop - March, 1982, to be conducted by faculty from Beaver College.

II. In-house workshops - all about two hours:

1. Using writing to teach course content
2. Evaluating writing

   A. Articulating standards of evaluation
   B. Alternatives to the intensive marking of papers, including holistic evaluation.

3. Developing writing assignments
4. Dealing with drafts of student papers

   A. Commenting on drafts
   B. Peer review

III. English Department workshops:

1. Discussion of assignments from other disciplines and how the freshman composition courses can best prepare students to fulfill them.
2. Departmental consensus in defining the specific skills to be taught in freshman composition courses and consideration of how these skills relate to writing in disciplines other than English and to professional writing.

   (In addition to initiating discussion of the above topics, I also hope to integrate sample forms of written work from other disciplines into the "Longwood Style Manual" which is published by the English Department and is a required reference work for all freshmen.

3. The uses of expressive (exploratory) writing in literature courses.

IV. Workshop for the English Proficiency Committee - (This is a faculty committee composed of one representative from each department charged with maintaining competence in student writing.

1. Evaluation of student papers to attempt a cross-disciplinary consensus concerning standards for acceptable writing.

V. Workshops for tutors in the Writing Laboratory:

1. Tutors would be invited to participate in the English Department workshops.
2. Tutors would discuss and practice aiding students to respond appropriately to writing assignments in all disciplines.

FORMAT FOR A FACULTY WORKSHOP ON USING WRITING TO TEACH COURSE CONTENT

I. Time: about two hours

II. Materials:

1. Moffett and Britton's models of the kinds and orders of discourse
2. Jacqueline Berke's heuristic "Twenty Questions for the Writer"
3. Handout on using "shortwrites" in conjunction with class discussion or lecture.
4. Sample of a form for eliciting written response to readings
5. Sample exercise requiring students to discover and articulate organizing principles to synthesize lists of facts

III. Begin with a brief (15-minute) discussion of the variety of purposes for which writing is used and the variety of modes appropriate to these purposes.

1. Discussion would be based on the models of Britton and Moffett and would focus on the "expressive mode" in which the primary audience is the writer himself and the primary purpose the generation and exploration of ideas.
2. Discussion would cover the purposes for which the expressive mode can be used and specific examples of the mode such as shopping lists, diaries, journals, first drafts, and scribblings in the margins of books. It will be important to demonstrate that most of the participants themselves already make extensive use of expressive writing.

IV. Discuss the pedagogical benefits of using expressive writing.

1. Expressive writing reinforces memory
2. It requires an active rather than a passive response to readings, lectures, and discussions from all students. (Oral discussions in class cannot assure this.)
3. It stimulates discussion by giving students both time to think out their responses and the confidence that they have something to say.
4. Expressive writing gives students practice in analyzing and synthesizing information.
5. It can be used to focus students' attention on major points in readings and lectures.
6. It can save class time by obliging students to deal seriously in writing with topics that cannot be covered in depth in class.
7. As Bacon noted, writing of all types develops precision of thought.

V. Applications: Specific methods for using writing to teach course content.

(If possible, I will ask colleagues who have already used these methods to give brief explanations of their procedures. If this is not possible, I will give a brief description of each method and suggest contexts in which each might be used.)

1. Journals
2. Lecture notes
3. Written responses to readings, lectures, or discussions, including summaries, paraphrases, application of concepts, diagrams, flow-charts, etc.
4. Invention-the use of heuristics
5. Using writing to prepare students for examinations: Students are asked to review and synthesize the material in a course by doing exploratory writing on hypothetical or actual examination questions before the examination.

In discussing these forms of expressive writing, the workshop leader should demonstrate that they can be used either as ends in themselves or to prepare students for more formal types of transactional writing.

VI. **Discuss methods of evaluating expressive or exploratory writing. Review the alternatives.**

1. Since the primary purpose of expressive writing is generally exploration rather than communication, correctness of surface features should not be a major criterion for evaluation.
2. Instructors could simply check to make certain the work had been done, rather than giving a letter grade. Completion of the exercises could be required for passing the course, even if they were not graded.
3. Instructors need to check and respond to student journals periodically, especially in the beginning of the semester. Evaluation need not be intensive or extensive.
4. Instructors could contract with students at the beginning of the course to grade journals or other forms of expressive writing entirely on the basis of quantity.
5. Instructors could grade on a combination of quantity and quality. Evaluation of quality can be done rapidly and with reasonable accuracy by making holistic judgments on several passages.

VII. Conclusion of the workshop:

1. Participants could be asked to free write for ten minutes either on possibilities for using expressive writing in their courses or on potential problems they foresee in using these methods.

   A. The facilitator would point out that in doing this exercise, participants were using writing for exploration in a way that they could duplicate in their classes.
   B. After ten minutes of writing, participants would be invited to share ideas they had generated with the group.

OR

2. Alternatively, if there were several instructors from the same discipline, they might wish at the end of the session to form a collaborative learning group to discuss specific applications to their field.

The following paper describes a faculty development program on writing tentatively proposed for Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia. This program was developed at the National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Institute at Beaver College on writing across the curriculum and I would like to thank a number of the Institute staff and participants-including Jerry Belcher, Norma Hernandez, Peggy Horodowich, Elaine Maimon, Barry O'Connor and Linda Thomas-for their substantive help with the project.

The sequence in which I have listed the five major components of the program in the preface to this paper is not necessarily chronological. But, all of the advice I have received advocates strongly that the first formal workshops should, if possible, be conducted by outsiders rather than by those within the institution for two reasons. First, if we are indeed novice prophets of the creed that writing should be the common concern of instructors in all disciplines, we can expect to suffer some of the consequences that traditionally befall prophets. Among the less violent of these consequences is -- intitially at least -- not to be honored or given credence in one's own country. Therefore, we are well advised to ask a fervent co-religionist from another land to come and spread the word among us. Secondly, if, as a colleague has suggested, conducting faculty workshops is like Franklin's brave experiment of flying his kite in an electrical storm, the results in both cases could be either an advance in learning or the incineration of the rash experimenter and his theories. To shift the metaphor a bit, it seems to me slightly cowardly, but certainly practical in terms of developing a program, to engage experienced outside consultants partly to act as lightening rods to discharge and, one hopes, harmlessly deflect, the thunderbolts of our more skeptical colleagues.

For these and other reasons, I am proposing two major workshops conducted by consultants, one in August, 1982, the other in March, 1983, to establish the theoretical and practical foundations of the program, to win some converts, I hope, and perhaps to discharge some of the opposition.

To revert again to the metaphor of the prophet, I believe that while prophets from distant lands can stir enthusiasm for a new creed, the task of giving that creed an enduring institutional structure must generally be carried out by a native of the country. Therefore, I propose to hold a series of in-house workshops at which I and any converted colleagues whom I can inveigle into helping me, will act as facilitators.

The first of these workshops will be on using writing to teach course content. (The format and substance of this workshop are outlined in detail in the preface of this report.) I propose to offer this first because I believe that it would be the most immediately useful and least controversial of the workshop topics. Faculty members who are solidly convinced that teaching writing is solely the responsibility of the English Department can still see the merits of requiring writing to induce students to respond more actively to course content.

One objection, however, which I expect will be raised to using writing to teach content, is the problem of the resulting paper load. To address this very legitimate concern, I feel that any workshop urging instructors to require more writing should equip those instructors with efficient methods of responding to

or evaluating that writing. Therefore, I will incorporate a discussion of methods of evaluating informal or exploratory writing into the workshop on using writing to teach course content.

The next in-house workshop will be a more extensive discussion and practice of evaluating both formal and informal (or expressive and transactional) writing. The first purpose of this workshop will be to encourage participants to articulate (in writing) and to examine our standards for evaluating written work. The second aim will be to review alternative methods of responding to and evaluating writing, keeping in mind both the educational benefit to the student and efficiency for the instructor.

The third workshop will focus on developing writing assignments. Here we will discuss, among other topics, the need to articulate our own purposes in assigning particular writing tasks, helping students to define aim, audience and approach in their writing; requiring multiple drafts; and specifying both heuristic and revision procedures in the assignment itself.

The final workshop I propose will deal with methods of teaching drafting and revision. The need for these methods follows directly from a commitment to requiring more than one draft of an assignment. I suspect, however, that the practices of commenting on drafts and of peer review will be hardest to create enthusiasm for among our colleagues. Commenting, even briefly, requires a significant amount of an instructor's time, while training for, and practicing peer review inevitably take up class time. Implementing either strategy seems to me to presuppose a substantial commitment to teaching students how to write in one's discipline. For this reason, I will offer this session last.

The next major component of my proposed program is a series of workshops within the English Department. I hope to persuade as many as possible of my colleagues in the English Department to partitipate in the cross-disciplinary workshops in order to discuss writing with instructors in other fields. In addition to attending the college-wide workshops, however, we in the English Department should meet among ourselves to discuss the implications of a genuinely cross-disciplinary writing program.

One of my moments of revelation during the Beaver College Institute came when we were asked to compare two student responses to an assignment to describe a conch shell. One response was very literal and unadorned, while the other was highly imaginative and metaphorical. The exercise made me realize for the first time that the literal and objective description was not a failed prose poem by an unimaginative freshman, but rather, in its own right, was a perfectly competent scientific description of the object and fulfilled the assignment adequately. If my instinctive parochialism about the aims and audiences for which we need to prepare our students to write is characteristic, I believe that my department colleagues and I could profit by reexamining our assumptions.

To accomplish this re-examination, I will propose that several of the department's regular in-service sessions be devoted to a study of the relationship between the two semester freshman composition sequence and the writing done in other disciplines throughout the college. The first of these sessions would focus on a discussion of actual assignments from other disciplines and how we can best prepare students in freshman English to fulfill them. Later sessions would attempt

to develop a department-wide consensus on the specific skills which should be taught in the freshman composition courses to prepare students for academic writing outside the English Department and for professional writing.

In addition to proposing these in-service sessions, I hope also to give a cross-disciplinary emphasis to our style manual. The Longwood Style Manual, which is produced by the English Department and required for all freshman students contains a discussion of the freshman composition program and examples of the Modern Language Association style of documentation, as well as models of student essays and literary criticism. I would like to add both samples of the American Psychological Association style of documentation and a series of samples of writing in other disciplines such as case studies, reviews, and lab reports to which instructors could refer their students for models.

The fourthelement in the proposed program includes workshops with an already established faculty-wide committee to enforce minimum competence in student writing. Historically, the function of this committee has been simply to identify and screen those students with severe writing deficiencies. This seems to me a legitimate function if it is coupled with remediation, which it now is. But, I hope to persuade the members of this committee to take a broader view of their responsibilities for maintaining competence in writing and to promote the cause of writing within their respective departments.

The final component of my program is to work with the tutors in our Writing Laboratory. Longwood has a small master's degree program in English which supplies tutors to staff some remedial classes and a workshop for tutoring writing. While, unlike Yale, we cannot offer instructors who are willing to assign more writing, the services of teaching assistants to do the grading, still, we can offer them a tutoring facility which can save the instructor's time and offer students support.

Tutors in this program are regularly invited to participate in the English Department in-service sessions, several of which will this year be devoted to writing across the curriculum. In addition, however, I intend, in tutor training sessions, to practice tutorial conferences on papers and assignments from a variety of disciplines.

Let me comment on one final element in any faculty development program that is not easily defined, but is absolutely essential for any measure of success. That element might be called the spirit of good will. Those who organize or conduct these workshops must possess not only a familiarily with the theory and practice of teaching writing, but also a capacity to genuinely listen to those in all disciplines and to respond with empathy. They must possess not only scholarly intelligence, but also a social intelligence based on an essential respect for their colleagues. They must be flexible rather than dogmatic. Finally, they must possess a sound faith that good ideas coupled with good will will eventually prevail, even though that eventuality may be long in coming.